



BROOKLINE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD

Building a Better Brookline

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
COMMERCIAL VIBRANCY STUDY
2013**

Background



Agenda:

- Overview of Vibrancy Study
- Findings
- What We've Heard From Residents
- Recommendations
- Implementation Strategies

Vibrancy Research



- Site Visits:
 - Northampton
 - Davis Square
 - Harvard Square
 - Centre St., Jamaica Plain
 - Portsmouth, NH
 - Burlington, VT
- Interviews:
 - Government Officials, Staff, Local Merchants, Commercial Property Owners, Business and Neighborhood Associations.

Research Findings



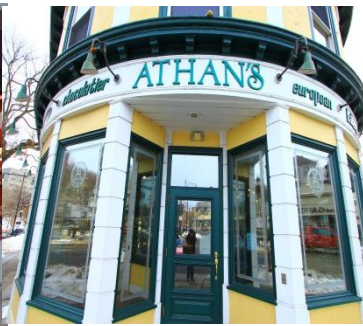
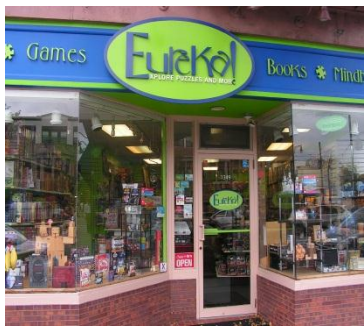
- Amenities, Events & Partnerships Matter
 - Public Art
 - Small, *Welcoming* Open Spaces
 - Food Options
 - Pedestrian Amenities
 - Lots of events led by non-gov't community groups



Research Findings



- Brookline's Commercial Areas *ARE* Vibrant
 - Mix of businesses not common in many “vibrant” places
 - Services uses good for the neighborhood
 - Public Transportation



Retail Trends: Brookline vs. Region

Industry	Town of Brookline			Boston - Cambridge - Quincy, MA-NH Metropolitan NECTA Region
	Businesses			Businesses
	2004	2012	% Change	% Change, 2004 to 2012
Retail Trade	144	129	-10.4%	-5.6%
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	23	15	-34.8%	0.0%
Electronics & Appliance Stores	11	6	-45.5%	-28.6%
Building Material & Garden Supply Stores	6	3	-50.0%	-7.5%
Other Retail Stores*	34	29	-14.7%	-21.6%
Food and Beverage Stores	27	26	-3.7%	3.1%

Source: Mass Department of Labor

Leaking Opportunities



- **Plenty of Buying Power**

- Median family income is approx. \$150,000
- Estimated median household disposable income of \$72,456
- Total Brookline retail demand was \$1.1 Billion in 2012
- Brookline retail sales were less than half of that at \$405 Million

Sources:

US Census 2009-2011 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Table B19119

ESRI MarketPlace Profile, 2013

What We've Heard From Residents



anchors arts **attractive** clean
cultural destination diversity friendly **green** lighting mix
parks neat open pedestrian plantings proximity
public **restaurants** retailers safe social **space**
vibrancy vibrant walkability welcoming

Our Demographics



- 45%/55% Male/Female Ratio
- 59% of 20 – 29 y/o are Female
- 21% increase in children 9 and under since 2000
- 57% of all families with children under 18 years old are dual-income families
- 44% of families without young children are dual- income

Recommendations



1. Events

- More frequent, consistent public relations

2. Open Space

- Greener, cleaner and connected

3. Community Staff Support

- Pool resources, build capacity and support

4. Identify Barriers to Retail Shopping

- Market study, Business directory, improved way finding

5. Storefront Mix

- Networking property owners, existing retailers and prospective tenants

Implementation Strategies - Community



- **Events**
 - Form a monthly series of events, to be led by business associations.
 - Explore the feasibility of a large, Town-wide event in commercial areas to have a regional draw.
- **Open Space**
 - Establish process for adopting spaces for programming and maintenance
- **Identify Barriers to Retail Shopping**
 - Create inclusive directories of all businesses to be displayed permanently within Town kiosks and online.
- **Commercial Mix**
 - Form a commercial realtor and a local business network.

Implementation Strategies – ED



- **Events**
 - Prioritize spending ED Staff time and the revolving fund for special events on those events that are managed and staffed outside of Town Hall, have a higher ratio of privately raised funds
 - Revamp Town visitor website, including a new Town-wide events calendar
- **Open Space**
 - Partner with Parks & Open Space on small streetscape improvement projects
- **Community Support**
 - Create a business database for Town-wide use in communications, and to assist Business Organizations in reaching out to individual businesses.
- **Identify Barriers to Retail Shopping**
 - Market study
 - Business Districts Assessment